A man is not a learned pandit simply because he talks much. He is a real pandit who is tranquil, free from hatred, free from fear. —*The Dhammapada*

THEOSOPHY

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THOUGHTS ON THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

THE breadth and depth of the larger Theosophical Movement may sometimes be lost sight of as a result of the strenuous efforts by workers to spread distinctively Theosophical teachings. Yet the source of defining conceptions of the Theosophical Movement to which students most often refer is the article of that title by William Q. Judge, and there, among other things, he says that "the great struggle between Science and Religion, clearly portrayed by Draper, was every bit as much a motion of the Theosophical Movement as is the present Society of that name —indeed that struggle, and the freedom gained thereby for Science, were really as important in the advance of the world, as are our different organizations."

It becomes evident that Mr. Judge was writing to guard against the development of sectarian egotism among the theosophists of his time as well as to provide general information about the movement. While the work of spreading Theosophy as Theosophy, identified as coming from H. P. Blavatsky, is of unique importance, this very work includes recognition of the diverse modes of historical influence of the Adept Fraternity, which means the study of the Movement in the wider sense given it by Mr. Judge. His most familiar statement is this: "Wherever thought has struggled to be free, wherever spiritual ideas, as opposed to forms and dogmatism, have been promulgated, there the great movement is to be discerned." Masonry is called "a great and important part of the

true Theosophical Movement"; and among its political expressions, he says, "is to be counted the Independence of the American colonies, ending in the formation of a great nation, theoretically based on Brotherhood."

We have no difficulty in recognizing how important are the changes worked in the minds of men by such influences as the Scientific revolution, the Masonic principle of tolerance, and the formation of the American Republic based upon impersonal conceptions of human rights and possibilities. The use made of scientific ideas by H. P. Blavatsky is evident in both *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, and also of Masonic symbols as explanatory tools. The second Fundamental Proposition of the Secret Doctrine is plainly if only partially embodied in all scientific thinking. H.P.B. was thoroughly in accord with the claim that science had cleared the air of much theological misconception, making at least possible undistorted thinking about Deity. These ideas are to be found in her article, "What Are the Theosophists?", where she also said:

> Born in the United States of America, the Society was constituted on the model of its Mother Land. The latter, omitting the name of God from its constitution lest it should afford a pretext one day to make a state religion, gives absolute equality to all religions in its laws. All support and each is in turn protected by the State. The Society, modelled upon this constitution, may fairly be termed a "Republic of Conscience."

Other considerations no doubt entered into the choice of the United States as the scene of the effort begun by H.P.B. in 1875, such as those spoken of on page 444 of Vol. II of *The Secret Doctrine*, and developed by Mr. Judge in his *Path* article, "On the Future: A Few Reflections," and it seems possible to say that various conditions in this country also served her purposes. For one thing, Theosophy was especially likely to take hold in America, H.P.B. said in the second of her Messages to the American Theosophists.

There are, one may think, certain prerequisites to effective work by a Teacher with particular objectives in mind. In general, what H.P.B. set out to do could not have been attempted in the eighteenth century. The minds of men would not then have been ready for the philosophical and psychological ideas presented in her books and articles. The necessary conceptual vocabulary was lacking; moreover, the revolutions of Europe and America were needed

to establish habits of free inquiry before ideas of such far-reaching import could be entertained. A Mesmer had to bring awareness of certain aspects of occult psychodynamics before the complex teaching of man's sevenfold nature could have hope of being understood. There needed to be at least the beginnings of scholarly exploration of Oriental thought and religion, before the wealth of Indian metaphysics and psychological knowledge could gain wide attention. German and English scholars, and Emerson and some others in America, helped in preparations of this sort. Finally, there was the impact of the Spiritualistic movement, beginning in 1848, the phenomena of which not only required philosophical explanation but were also threatening psychic and moral infection to an unwary public. While the feats of the mediums gave H.P.B. access to public attention, they also, she said, brought on a "crisis," since the phantom-world of Kama-loka "had burst in a muddy torrent into ten thousand séance-rooms, and created most misleading notions of man's *post-mortem* state."

The question of the "preparations" required by the work of a Great Teacher calls for considerable study and reflection. With respect to races and nations, the general law of intellectual and moral evolution is a governing principle, since there are limits to the development possible to any human group within a given cycle. This principle is stated in *The Secret Doctrine* on page 326 of Vol. I. Resources in philosophical ideas are of course a factor. (See page 120 in Lookout for this month.) For example, in his essay on the first chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Mr. Judge remarks, in connection with man's sevenfold nature: "It would avail nothing at present to specify the Aryan nomenclature for all the sheaths—as they call them—that envelope the soul, because we as yet have not acquired the necessary ideas." And in *An Epitome of Theosophy* the same writer explains that the real division of the principles cannot now be understood, "and must for a time remain esoteric, because it requires certain senses not usually developed for its understanding." The present division (as given in *The Ocean of Theosophy* and the *Key*) may, he suggests, be "developed and corrected as students advance and themselves develop."

Another sort of "preparation" has to do with the attraction to this plane of beings who would be of great assistance to mankind. This attraction may be generated by those who strive to live lives of benefit to others, "until at last the 'gods' in distant spheres" feel

the force of their good action and are drawn "to return again to help mankind on the recurrence of a better age." This is remarked in *Notes on The Bhagavad-Gita*, and elsewhere Mr. Judge calls these beings "long-gone gnanis" who may return to earth when conditions favorable to their presence are caused to exist.

As to preparations for the cycle soon to begin, these are spoken of in both general and particular terms. The most specific reference is on the last page of the *Key*, where Madame Blavatsky anticipates that work done by students during the years of her absence will have improved the state of men's hearts and minds. She also hoped for an accessible literature, such as now exists, and "a numerous and *united* body of people ready to welcome the new torch-bearer of Truth."

> He [she continues] will find the minds of men prepared for his message, a language ready for him in which to clothe the new truths he brings, an organization awaiting his arrival, which will remove the merely mechanical material obstacles and difficulties from his path. Think how much one, to whom such an opportunity is given, could accomplish.

The general references to these preparations have broader application. All the articles which speak of the changes which took place in the attitudes of people during the last quarter of the nineteenth century have equal application in the present. Many of Mr. Judge's counsels also apply, such as, for example, his statement that "we are not working for some definite organization of the new years to come, but for a change in the Manas and Buddhi of the Race." Then, speaking as one burdened by useless fuss and detail, he said:

> What a petty lot of matter we spend time on, when so much is transitory. After a hundred years what will be the use of all this? Better that a hundred years hence a principle of freedom and an impulse of work should have been established. The small errors of a life are nothing, but the general sum of thought is much. . . . I care everything for the unsectarianism that H.P.B. died to start.

The most comprehensive statement concerning preparation is that on page four of the *Ocean*, where it is said that "every system of thought, science, religion, government, and society is changing, and men's minds are only preparing for an alteration into that state which will permit the race to advance to the point suitable for these elder brothers to introduce their actual presence to our

sight." This is the sort of "preparation" that can be said to be a part of cyclic law, since much of it is of the sort suggested by the statement in Mr. Judge's article, "On the Future," in which he says: "The deeds of men, the enterprises of merchants, and the wars of soldiers all follow implicitly a law that is fixed in the stars, and while they copy the past they ever symbolize the future." Here Mr. Judge is speaking of the larger evolutionary forces which gathered the representatives of all the races on the American continent, causing the blending of cultures and ethnic lines, and of the rushing flow of people and events which has created the restless, energetic civilization of the United States—the region where another great chapter of cyclic destiny will eventually unfold.

Meanwhile, in our own time, the changes in human attitudes are proceeding at an enormously accelerated rate. Beliefs are being shredded by the concatenations of war, by economic disorders and technological disturbances to both the social and the natural environments, and by the altering susceptibilities of the psychic natures of many millions. Vulnerability to suggestion increases while the old restraints lose nearly all their force. Ancient faiths are reborn in people attracted by their exotic origin, who take only the externals and leave the inner meanings unnoticed. The pleasures of new things are replaced by the excitements of new feelings or sensations. Openness to new ideas is the order of the day, but with little protection against old excesses and abuses stamped with fashionable labels. At the same time, deep moral feelings are finding expression in awakening allegiances to nature, to the peoples in other lands, and to non-commercial activities and goals.

Another world of more human relationships and affairs seems slowly coming into existence, amounting to what might be thought of as a fresh or renewed set of psychic principles, bringing to birth a new psychic and less physical man, with even the kind of "innocence" which may result from so complete a break with the past and with old tradition. One might even regard all these changes as providing improved lunar receptacles awaiting another "lighting up of Manas," or its further incarnation as the cycle comes around. Many of the ingredients of a new beginning are surely present, although still in a quite plastic state, while there are also various signs of ripening opportunity for growth and higher development under the guidance of a true inspiration.

FROM "THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM"

The Path of Occultism

To be a good Theosophist, is it necessary to believe actively in Occultism? I mean: If a man feels the ennobling influence of the philosophy of Theosophy and endeavors to live by it, is it absolutely necessary for his profit and development to do more than believe that certain occult facts are facts, while he personally dislikes Occultism and avoids it in any form, finding Theosophic teachings sufficient to him without it?

W.Q.J.—The questioner has either heard from others or read that a good Theosophist *must* believe that Occultism is our highest goal as members of the T.S. Such is not the truth. At present "the T.S. is not," as an Adept once wrote to Mr. Sinnett, "a hall for teaching Occultism," although that is pursued by some. It is a Society meant for the giving of a true view of life and of Nature to a suffering race which otherwise would sink into a spiritual death brought on by the joint efforts of materialists and theologians. Hence, at present, the true Theosophist is the true Altruist who sinks his personal desires for progress in a secret and fascinating art, so that he may give this true view of life, of death, and of immortality to as many of his fellow-men as he can reach. Many members of our Society, dazzled by the wonders of Occultism, have hastily taken up its study without realizing that it is something that demands not only will but wide intellect and unflinching memory; and many have failed as many others will.

F.T.S. using tobacco defend the habit as having certain qualities very protective in studying Occultism. Is this true; and, if so, why is it incompatible with one of the five precepts taught by the Lord Buddha, viz: "Shun drugs and drinks that work the wit abuse; Clear minds, clean bodies need no soma juice"? And is it not possible to educate the will, the spiritual will, to resist effectually everything which this deleterious weed tends to annul, if it does annul?

W.Q.J.—I should like very much to know who is that F.T.S. who "defends the use of tobacco as a protective in studying Occultism," for he or she cannot know what protection means or Occultism

either. The Editor of the FORUM has well answered the question, since the sentence I refer to, being only narrative, is not a question. Yet it is important as pointing to error of a vital sort. There are hundreds of Hindu occultists who never have indulged in tobacco; but they have not interdicted it to others. They protect themselves by means that can only be used in the plane where such protection is needful, and that is the plane where neither tobacco nor sentiment on that or any other subject has place. Tobacco may protect the carcass from germs of disease, but that security to safety is needed by all men, whether they are studying Occultism or not. The whole question of tobacco or no tobacco is purely material. It has been discovered that it does not degrade except by abuse, but at the same time it was found and declared that other narcotics and stimulants, such as hemp, opium, and spirits, do dynamically obstruct and spiritually degrade. Hence these tears—and tobacco.

In the answer of "F.L.M." (to question No. 3 in the FORUM) *in regard to "Meditation," the writer several times refers to the control of the "vital electric currents or agents of unconscious mind."*

By the latter term, I understand, is implied the inner consciousness or the Will force distinguished from mental effort, and also that the writer is able not only to recognize the physical expression of this force but also to control it.

We are conscious of mental effort, but usually the impulse of the Will produces no physical sensation of itself.

Many of us now groping in a boundless void could at least feel our way in the darkness, could we thus ascertain that our inner consciousness was indeed impressed and working in the direction of our convictions.

Let us have some elementary elucidation of this subject.

Can such consciousness be cultivated, and, if so, what are the initial steps?

W.Q.J.—The answer referred to was made by a student who had discovered that, as far as he was concerned, the vital currents could be centered upon desired parts of the body, and that in his case, if they were centered in the head, he would be engaged more in mental works than bodily, and *vice versa.* Proceeding with this, he found that some ailments could be thus driven away by centering his vital force upon the place where they existed. It is a form of will power, which to be used requires a well cultivated and

balanced imagination. Much abused word as "imagination" is, it is the only one that will express the necessities of the case. If your imagination cannot make a *picture* of the spot and of the force, you can never—except by accident—cause the forces to flow there. Hence the initial step is to cultivate the interior image-making power. Unless this is done, the will in these planes can hardly be directed to its end, for with no image the forces have no place to focus upon; and it is a huge error to suppose that scientists are right in saying that imagination is a useless, although perhaps pleasant, power. As each human being is *sui generis*, has his own methods interiorly, peculiar to him and to no other, one should not look for hard and fast rules for all, but go to work upon himself, find himself out of whom he is most ignorant, and proceed upon the lines thereby indicated. All methods should be tried, and one's own processes of thought and feeling carefully observed. Without such inspection, rules and discussions are useless; by it—if truly pursued—anything can be discovered.

Do the Masters know one's earnest desires and thoughts? I desire to become a chela in my next incarnation. What effect will it have upon my condition and environment in that life? Is my desire forgotten or lost, or is there record made of it?

W.Q.J.—The effect of a desire to become a chela in the next incarnation will be to place one where the desire may be probably realized. Its effect on the next condition and environment depends on so many things that no definite reply could be given. If the desire be held determinedly and unceasingly, the goal is brought nearer, but that also brings up *all* the karma of the past, thus precipitating an immense conflict on the individual: a conflict which when once begun has only two ways of ending, one, total defeat, the other, success; there is no halfway. As Dante wrote, "Who enters here leaves hope behind." Therefore, in general, the next life, or rather the life of a chela, while full of noble possibilities, is a constant battle from beginning to end. As to times and periods, it is said in the East that when the probationary chela steps on the path he will reach a goal in several births thereafter.

In what manner does entrance on the path of occultism cause the special evil latent in the individual to express itself in his life and acts? Is it because early steps in occult knowledge destroy the force of the conventional ideas of morality and abrogate the laws

which society and formal religion have adopted for their security; and that, therefore, for a time, until the principles of ALTRUISM *assume definite sway over his mind and motives, the individual is without practical and efficient restraints upon his* LOWER SELF? *Or is it, on the other hand, the operation of a* KARMIC LAW *upon the character of the individual, making use of his* PERSONAL VANITY *as a fulcrum for forcing the special weakness of his Lower Self into a reckless expression of itself?*

W.Q.J.—While the questioner answers his question himself, it only gives half of the subject. The real study—on the path—of occultism not only brings out latent evil but also latent good. The right way to express it is, "the study of true occultism, or the walking on its path, brings up the entire latent character of the person." Hence while some in this case suddenly seem to grow worse and worse, others suddenly grow better, deeper, broader, and finer. It is customary to look at the shadow in these matters. While it is true that the majority of men are inherently bad, there are examples of the opposite. The study of occultism does not destroy rules of right and wrong, but the student, having opened up the fires below the surface, may be easily carried away in the sudden heat engendered. The dweller of the threshold in *Zanoni* is no fiction. It is ever with each student, for it is the baser part of humanity that he begins in real earnest as never before to fight. At the same time, the brightly shining Adonai is also there to help and save if we will let that be done. Karma that might not operate except after years or lives is called upon and falls, as H.P.B. has so clearly stated, in one mass upon the head of him who has called upon immutable law. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread," and, rushing in before they have the slightest idea of their own character even on its surface, they are often destroyed. But the practice of altruism is not by itself occultism, and it saves from danger and prepares one for another incarnation in some body and age when everything will favor us. We have yet left some few hundred thousand of mortal years, and ought not to be too precipitate.

(Questions and answers included in this installment are reprinted from the following issues of the *Theosophical Forum*, in this sequence: October, 1890; October, 1890; April-May, 1890; November, 1889; December, 1889.)

EVOLUTION

[The material presented here as a single article originally appeared in the *Path* as two articles, one in August, 1890, signed by Mr. Judge, the other in July, 1892, unsigned, both titled "Evolution." Since the second of these articles could easily be a continuation of the first, in which Mr. Judge speaks of another installment to come, we reprint together under the same title. —Eds.]

THE word "evolution" is the best word, from a Theosophical standpoint, to use in treating of the genesis of man and things, as the process which it designates is that which has always been stated in the ancient books from whose perusal the tenets of the wisdom religion can be gathered. In the *Bhagavad Gita* we find Krishna saying that "at the beginning of the day of Brahma all things come forth from the non-developed principle, and at the coming on of Brahma's night they are resolved into it again," and that this process goes on from age to age. This exactly states evolution as it is defined in our dictionaries, where it is said to be a process of coming forth, or a development. The "days and nights of Brahma" are immense periods of time during which evolution proceeds, the manifestation of things being the "day," and their periodical resolution into the Absolute, the "night."

If, then, everything is evolved, the word "creation" can only be properly applied to any combination of things already in existence, since the primordial matter or basis cannot be created.

The basis of the theosophical system is evolution, for in Theosophy it is held that all things are already in *esse*, being brought forth or evolved, from time to time, in conformity to the inherent law of the Absolute. The very next question to be asked is, What is this inherent law of the Absolute? as nearly as can be stated. Although we do not and cannot know the Absolute, we have enough data from which to draw the conclusion that its inherent law is to periodically come forth from subjectivity into objectivity, and to return again to the former, and so on without any cessation. In the objective world we have a figure or illustration of this in the rising and setting of the sun, which of all natural objects best

shows the influence of the law. It rises, as H. P. Blavatsky says, from the (to us) subjective, and at night returns to the subjective again, remaining in the objective world during the day. If we substitute, as we must when attempting to draw correspondences between the worlds, the word "state" for locality or place, and instead of the sun we call that object "the Absolute," we have a perfect figure, for then we will have the Absolute rising above the horizon of consciousness from the subjective state, and its setting again for that consciousness when the time of night arrives—that is, the night of Brahma. This law of periodicity is the same as that of the cycles, which can be seen governing in every department of nature.

But let us assume a point of departure, so as to get a rapid survey of evolution, Theosophically considered. And let it be at the time when this period of manifestation began. What was projected into the objective world at that time must have been life itself, which, under the action of the law of differentiation, split itself up into a vast number of lives, which we may call individual, the quantity of which it is not possible for us of finite mind to count. In the Hindu system these are called Jivas and Jivatman. Within these lives there is contained the entire plan to be pursued during the whole period of manifestation, since each life is a small copy of the great All from which it came. Here for studious minds a difficulty arises, calling for some attention, for they may ask, "What, then, do you do with that which we call 'matter,' and by and through which the lives manifest themselves?"

The reply is that the so-called matter is an illusion and is not real matter, but that the latter—sometime known in Europe as primordial matter—cannot be seen by us. The real matter is itself only another form of the life first thrown out, but in a less perfect state of differentiation, and it is on a screen of this real matter that its inner energies project pictures which we call matter, mistaking them for the real. It may then be further asked, "Have we not been led to suppose that that which we supposed was matter, but which you now say is an illusion, is something absolutely necessary to the soul for acquiring experience of nature?" To this I reply that such is not the case, but that the matter needed for the soul to acquire experience through is the real unseen matter. It is that matter of which psychic bodies are composed, and those other "material" things all the way up to spirit. It is to this that the

Bhagavad Gita refers where it says that spirit (purusha) and matter (prakriti) are coeternal and not divisible from each other. That which we and science are accustomed to designate matter is nothing more than our limited and partial cognition of the phenomena of the real or primordial matter.

This position is not overturned by pointing to the fact that all men in general have the same cognitions of the same objects, that square objects are always square, and that shadows fall in the same line for all normal people, for even in our own experience we see that there is such a thing as a collective change of cognition, and that thus it is quite possible that all normal people are merely on the single plane of consciousness where they are not yet able to cognize anything else. In the case of hypnotizing, everything appears to the subject to be different at the will of the operator, which would not be possible if objects had any inherent actuality of their own, apart from our consciousness.

In order to justify a discussion of the Theosophical system of evoution, it is necessary to see if there be any radical difference between it and that which is accepted in the world, either in scientific circles or among Theologians. That there is such a distinction can be seen at once, and we will take first that between Theosophy and Theology. Here, of course, this is in respect to the genesis of the inner man more especially, athough Theology makes some claim to know about race descent. The Church either says that the soul of each man is a special creation in each case, or remains silent on the subject, leaving us, as it was once so much the fashion to say, "In the hands of a merciful Providence," who, after all, says nothing on the matter. But when the question of the race is raised, then the priest points to the Bible, saying that we all come from one pair, Adam and Eve. On this point, Theology is more sure than science, as the latter has no data yet, and does not really know whether we owe our origin to one pair—male and female—or to many.

Theosophy, on the other hand, differs from the Church, asserting that *Paramatma* alone is self-existing, single, eternal, immutable, and common to all creatures, high and low alike; hence it never was and never will be created; that the soul of man evolves, is consciousness itself, and is not specially created for each man born on the earth, but assumes through countless incarnations

different bodies at different times. Underlying this must be the proposition that, for each Manvantara or period of manifestation, there is a definite number of souls or egos who project themselves into the current of evolution which is to prevail for that period or manvantara. Of course, this subject is limitless, and the consideration of the vast number of systems and worlds, where the same process is going on with a definite number of egos in each, staggers the minds of most of those who take the subject up. And, of course, I do not mean to be understood as saying that there is a definite number of egos in the whole collection of systems in which we may imagine evolution as proceeding, for there could be no such definiteness considered in the mass, as that would be the same as taking the measure of the Absoute. But, in viewing any part of the manifestation of the Absolute, it is allowable for us to say that there are to be found such a definite number of egos in that particular system under consideration: this is one of the necessities of our finite consciousness.

Following out the line of our own agreement, we reach the conclusion that, included within the great wave of evolution which relates to the system of which this earth is a part, there are just so many egos either fully developed or in a latent state. These have gone round and round the wheel of rebirth, and will continue to do so until the wave shall meet and be transformed into another. Therefore, there could be no such thing as a special creation of souls for the different human beings born on this earth, and for the additional reason that, if there were, then spirit would be made subservient to illusion, to mere human bodies. So that in respect to theology, we deny the propositions, *first*, that there is any special creation of souls; *second*, that there is, or was, or could be, by any possibility, any creation of this world or of any other; and *third*, that the human race descended from one pair.

In taking up the difference existing between our theory and that of science, we find the task easy. Upon the question of progress, and how progress or civilization may be attained by man, and whether any progress could be possible if the theories of science be true, our position is that there could be no progress if the law of evolution as taught in the schools is true, even in a material sense. In this particular, we are diametrically opposed to science. Its assumption is that the present race on the earth may be supposed to belong to a common stock which in its infancy was

rude and barbarous, knowing little more than the animal, living like the animal, and learning all it now knows simply by experience gained in its contest with nature through its development. Hence they give us the paleolithic age, the neolithic age, and so on. In this scheme we find no explanation of how man comes to have innate ideas. Some, however, seeing the necessity for an explanation of this phenomenon, attempt it in various ways; and it is a phenomenon of the greatest importance. It is explained by Theosophy in a way peculiar to itself, and of which more will be said as we go on.

A correspondent of *Path* says: "I am unable to get a comprehensive view of evolution Theosophically. Does a 'round' mean once around the seven planets which belong to the earth chain? If so, how is the moon our parent?"

A round means a going once around the seven globes of the earth-chain. It was also called a "ring." Some have confused it with incarnating in the seven races on any one planet. The seven races have to go seven times around the seven globes of this chain, developing in each the characteristics of each, which cannot be obtained in any other way.

There are seven globes in the chain, of which the earth is one. The other six are not visible to us, as they are made of matter in a different state, and on a different plane, from matter as we know it and see it. The first race began on Globe No. 1 and carried on evolution there, and then went to Globe No. 2, and so on all around the seven. This it did seven times. Race No. 2 proceeded similarly, having in its possession all that was gained by No. 1. We are now the Fifth Race engaged in going round the whole chain; hence, we are called those of the Fourth Round, but are the Fifth Race. We must go round the whole chain of seven planets three times more before, as a race, we are perfected.

When the Seventh Round is finished, as well as the halt for rest that follows, we begin again as a Sixth Race and go through Seven Rounds as such. When that is concluded, we begin as the Seventh Race and repeat the process of Seven Rounds through the chain, thus bringing the grand evolution for this chain to a perfect end. After that we pass on upon a higher plane, the possessors of all the knowledge and development acquired during that sevenfold

progress. This is the outline of the grand scheme, and, as you see, includes the whole series of seven planets.

But in every round of planets, on each one, and in each race as it begins and proceeds, there are many sub-races, root races, and offshoots, all necessary in the process of development for each race. For a race cannot spring up in a moment, out of nothing; it must grow forth from something. Therefore, a new race is made by offshoots making sub-roots that finally grow slowly in the main race which will be. This is occurring in America, and hence here is afforded a present and perfect illustration. Here many examples of various root and sub and offshoot races coming together, by generation of children among themselves, are producing the sub root for the new race. This process will go on for a long period, during which old, decaying branchlets and offshoot families and races will be absorbed into the new growing stem, and when the time is ready—a long way off—for the new race, all will have to migrate to the next planet.

It is now plain that *ring* and *round* do not mean the process of going through the race in its process of formation on any planet, as its beginnings come on and are finally replaced by its finished product, but that these words refer to the grand march around the whole chain of globes, of which this earth is the fourth.

The question about the moon ought now to be clear. It is evident that the moon is not one of the seven planets. By reading *The Secret Doctrine*, we see that the moon is a *deserted planet* on the same plane as the earth—a fourth-round globe of a previous manvantara. It is the old fourth globe of an old chain, and is the parent of the earth, while the other six globes of our chain have similar parents, visible only from those globes. It is our parent because we came from it when the hour struck, long ago, for the migration from it of the humanity that had thereon passed through its grand sevenfold pilgrimage. In like manner, some future day, this earth will become "a moon" to some newer planet not now born.

Question 2. "If the prototype of all forms has always existed, how can new forms come through evolution of the physical or material?"

New material forms may come, but they are not prototypes. The latter are not material, therefore no confusion between the

two can exist. There is evolution of material forms, but prototypes remain unaffected. This is a question which requires the questioner to look up exact meanings of the words used by him. It is not substantial. Fix the true meanings, and the confusion will vanish.

Question 3. "If man made his first appearance as a material body, why does the embryo pass through all the changes, vegetable and animal, before birth?"

It is the order of nature. All the atoms have to grow used to their work before they can do it well and quickly. At first, as astral atoms only, they do it over and over again, until all the atoms acquire the *habit* of doing it without fail. They then go on to other work. This having been the way for ages, the human body is now gestated in nine months, whereas at earlier periods such gestation took years, later on, fewer years, and finally as now. In future times, the process will be finished more quickly, and then the embryo will pass through all these old states almost instantaneously. The reason, therefore, is that the physical human molecules of this period of evolution have only acquired the ability to pass through the series in nine months, as a result of millions of years of prior slow work. For nature goes by steps, one at a time. The embryo exhibits these phases because there are still left, in the matter used, the old impressions, and racial evolution is gradually wiping them out by transforming them into new organs, by eliminating those not useful and by condemning others. When the work is fully understood by *every atom* so that it acts with unerring, machine-like precision, it will be possible to bring out a body in a very short space of time.

He who would profit by the wisdom of the universal mind, has to reach it through *the whole of Humanity* without distinction of race, complexion, religion or social status. It is *altruism*, not *egoism* even in its most legal and noble conception, that can lead the unit to merge its little Self in the Universal Selves.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

letters · questions · comment

The idea of control is implicit in the application of Theosophical philosophy. Yet there often seems to be value in letting the mind roam from one thing to another, to explore, and to find out what *is to be controlled and how to go about it. What, then, is the meaning of control from a Theosophical standpoint?*

Letting the mind roam about *in order to* find out something implies a general attitude of purpose. If control is thought of as the assumption of responsibility, is this not a kind of control? The idea of control is often connected with restraint, without considering that restraint should intend to serve the ego by giving deliberate focus to the power to act. The capacity to take the faculties of mind or body and conform them to a higher purpose than their random function belongs to man as an enduring entity; it is not in the faculties nor in the act of controlling. Mr. Crosbie describes control as "the power of direction," adding that its exercise "in one way leads to its exercise in other ways until it covers the whole field of operation."

This leads to consideration of the duality of the mind. Amid all the crowd of thoughts and feelings that comprise the mind, there is the eternal, constant observer of whatever passes into its field of awareness—events, feelings, experiences. Recognizing this brings realization that no matter how carried away we may be by what we experience, we are never *wholly* involved, but can retain objectivity toward its effects. Moreover, this continuous awareness constitutes the basis for discerning the meaning of all that takes place. To refuse to exercise judgment, therefore, is to abdicate from egoic responsibiity. The standards by which we judge, then, become crucial. If they are at an over-seeing level, above the demands of our separate personalities, the Ego "seated in the heart of all beings" is awake and engaged. The relative functions of this duality of mind in incarnation are described by Mr. Crosbie in *Answers to Questions on the Ocean of Theosophy*, in answer to a question on the difference between Spirit and Soul. He says:

> Spirit is universal. It cannot be said to belong to anything

> or anybody. It is like the air, universal and everywhere. It cannot know Itself except as Soul. Spirit is the "power to become"; Soul is "the becoming." Spirit is the power to see and know; Soul is the seeing and knowing. Soul is the accumulation of perceptions and experiences by means of which Spiritual Identity is realized. (p. 21.)

Control, then, might be said to be primarily the exercise of selectivity in behalf of a greater awareness of the whole. Its significance does not lie in the fact of preventing anything, but in choosing the best disposition of energies. Whether disciplined creativity of the philosophic mind as artist or farmer, the ability to select intelligently and act accordingly does not inhibit action, but liberates it. There must, then, be periods when the forces to be used are allowed full play in order to reveal what they are, and how they can act. Then they may be pressed into the service of the more comprehensive vision of the mind. This requires no suppression of any faculties, though it does involve the determination not to abuse them. Understanding of cycles, therefore, is basic to a grasp of how evolution takes place, and also of why control cannot be comprehended in terms of a predetermined plan of how things "ought to be." Until the elements generated through past Karma precipitate, it is not possible to decide what is right to do. The vast diversity made possible by the incarnation of self-conscious beings in less developed forms of life is briefly summed up by H.P.B. in the *Theosophist* for July, 1884 (p. 246): "The course of a man's life is the resultant of two forces, namely, his former Karma and his will power."

In his article on "The Origin of Evil" (*Friendly Philosopher*), Mr. Crosbie suggests that control in no way consists in preventing the mind from exploring unknown possibilities, but in the cultivation of habitual alertness to the opportunities presented to us by the Law. He says:

> When we get the right attitude of mind—and that is what discipleship is—there is not a quality in us, not a force, not an attribute, but can be put to the best and highest use. We do not get off this plane. We do not cut off any part of our being. We do not destroy the usefulness of any part of us, but put all to the proper use and for the proper end. . . . If any being will trust the Law of his own nature, if he will work on with nature by helping all others in every direction possible, then all nature will turn and help him. It never was otherwise. It cannot be otherwise.

TRUE PROGRESS

IS IT AIDED BY WATCHING THE ASTRAL LIGHT?

PERHAPS those who have engaged in discussions about whether it is more advisable to become acquainted with the Astral Plane and to see therein than to study the metaphysics and ethics of theosophy may be aided by the experience of a fellow student. For several years I studied about and experimented on the Astral Light to the end that I might, if possible, develop the power to look therein and see those marvellous pictures of that plane which tempt the observer. But although in some degree success followed my efforts so far as seeing these strange things was concerned, I found no increase of knowledge as to the manner in which the pictures were made visible, nor as to the sources from which they rose. A great many facts were in my possession, but the more I accumulated the farther away from perception seemed the law governing them. I turned to a teacher, and he said:

"Beware of the illusions of matter."

"But," said I, "is this matter into which I gaze?"

"Yes; and of grosser sort than that which composes your body; full of illusions, swarming with beings inimical to progress, and crowded with the thoughts of all the wicked who have lived."

"How," replied I, "am I to know aught about it unless I investigate it?"

"It will be time enough to do that when you shall have been equipped properly for the exploration. He who ventures into a strange country unprovided with needful supplies, without a compass and unfamiliar with the habits of the people, is in danger. Examine and see."

Left thus to myself, I sought those who had dabbled in the Astral Light, who were accustomed to seeing the pictures therein every day, and asked them to explain. Not one had any theory, any philosophical basis. All were confused and at variance each with the other. Nearly all, too, were in hopeless ignorance as to other and vital questions. None were self-contained or dispassionate; moved by contrary winds of desire, each one appeared abnor-

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NOTE.—This article was first printed by Mr. Judge in the *Path* for July, 1890.

mal; for, while in possession of the power to see or hear in the Astral Light, they were unregulated in all other departments of their being. Still more, they seemed to be in a degree intoxicated with the strangeness of the power, for it placed them in that respect above other persons, yet in practical affairs left them without any ability.

Examining more closely, I found that all these "seers" were but half-seers—and hardly even that. One could hear astral sounds, but could not see astral sights; another saw pictures, but no sound or smell was there; still others saw symbols only, and each derided the special power of the other. Turning even to the great Emanuel Swedenborg, I found a seer of wonderful power, but whose constitution made him see in the Astral world a series of pictures which were solely an extension of his own inherited beliefs. And although he had had a few visions of actual, everyday affairs occurring at a distance, they were so few as only to be remarkable.

One danger warned against by the teacher was then plainly evident. It was the danger of becoming confused and clouded in mind by the recurrence of pictures which had no salutary effect so far as experience went. So again I sought the teacher and asked:

"Has the Astral Light no power to teach, and if not, why is it thus? And are there other dangers than what I have discovered?"

"No power whatever has the astral plane, in itself, to teach you. It contains the impressions made by men in their ignorance and folly. Unable to arouse the true thoughts, they continue to infect that light with the virus of their unguided lives. And you, or any other seer, looking therein will warp and distort all that you find there. It will present to you pictures that partake largely of your own constitutional habits, weaknesses, and peculiarities. Thus you only see a distorted or exaggerated copy of yourself. It will never teach you the reason of things, for it knows them not.

"But stranger dangers than any you have met are there when one goes further on. The dweller of the threshold is there, made up of all the evil that man has done. None can escape its approach, and he who is not prepared is in danger of death, of despair, or of moral ruin. Devote yourself, therefore, to spiritual aspiration and to true devotion, which will be a means for you to learn the causes that operate in nature, how they work, and what each one works upon."

I then devoted myself as he had directed, and discovered that a philosophical basis, once acquired, showed clearly how to arrive at *dispassion* and made *exercise* therein easy. It even enabled me to clear up the thousand doubts that assail those others who are peering into the Astral Light. This, too, is the old practice enjoined by the ancient schools from which our knowledge about the Astral Light is derived. They compelled the disciple to abjure all occult practices until such time as he had laid a sure foundation of logic, philosophy and ethics; and only then was he permitted to go further in that strange country from which many an unprepared explorer has returned bereft of truth and sometimes despoiled of reason. Further, I know that the Masters of the Theosophical Society have written these words: "Let the Theosophical Society flourish through moral worth and philosophy, and give up pursuit of phenomena." Shall we be greater than They, and ignorantly set the pace upon the path that leads to ruin?

BRYAN KINNAVAN

THE COMMON DENOMINATOR

It is natural to believe in great men. All mythology opens with demigods, and the circumstance is high and poetic. Our religion is the love and cherishing of these patrons. The gods of fable are the shining moments of great men. Great men are more distinguished by range and extent than by originality. If we require the originality which consists in weaving, like a spider, their web from their own bowels, no great men are original. Nor does valuable originality consist in unlikeness to other men. The hero is in the press of knights and the thick of events; and seeing what men want and sharing their desire, he adds the needful length of sight and of arm, to come at the desired point. The greatest genius is the most indebted man. A poet is no rattle-brain, saying what comes uppermost, and, because he says everything, saying at least something good; but a heart in unison with his time and country. Great genial power, one would also say, consists in not being original at all; in being altogether receptive; in letting the world do all, and suffering the spirit of the hour to pass unobstructed through the mind.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

on the lookout

Unimaginative Futurism

Humanist criticisms of the technological approach to predicting the future have been numerous and effective in recent years. A good example is the comment made by William Irwin Thompson on the projections of Herman Kahn and Anthony Weiner, in his book, *At the Edge of History*. In a section reviewing Kahn and Weiner's Hudson Institute study, *The Year 2000: A Framework for Speculation on the Next Thirty-Three Years*, Thompson says:

> . . . what is surprising about Kahn's world view is its utter dearth of imagination. When Kahn looks at the millennium, all he can see, in positive terms, is the growth of the Gross National Products of the major powers; and, in negative terms, thermonuclear war, human evolutionary stagnation, and irrational nativistic revolts. The GNP's of the major powers may increase, or the International Monetary Fund may collapse; since optimism is more congenial to the positivism of the liberal ideology, it is more efficient to be optimistic. It is also more efficient because the technocrats are the rulers, and to hold onto their power they must offer us a renewed faith in the system through the prospect of increasing prosperity.
>
> One wishes, however, that while the liberals were imagining astounding growth in the GNP, they might envision other achievements of civilization.

Psychological Confinements

In *Harper's* for last December, Frank Herbert focuses on this lack of imagination among futurists of Kahn's sort, endeavoring to account for it in psychological terms. Such thinkers are bound to the past, he suggests, because they approach problems wholly in terms of their own past experience. They—and often the rest of us—look for *familiar* solutions to present problems, because the familiar is comforting and reassuring. But, he says, we live in a universe characterized by change, and the possibilities of change need to be figured into all projections concerning the future. How we can learn or manage to think in this way is the problem. He suggests that we begin to think about "futurism" more freely:

> If we define futurism as an exploration beyond accepted limits, then the nature of limiting systems becomes our first object of exploration. That nature lies within ourselves. Some who say they are talking about "a future" are only talking about their own limits. The dominant pattern in current planning betrays a system of thinking that does *not* want to abandon old assumptions and that keeps seeking a surprise-free future. But if we lock down the future in the present, we deny that such a future has become the present—and the present has always been inadequate for the future . . .
>
> It dismays some people to think that we are in some kind of a jam session with our universe and that our survival demands an ever-increasing virtuosity, and ever-improving mastery of our instruments. Whatever we may retain of logic and reason, however, points in that direction. It indicates that the creation of *human* societies probably should become more of an art than a plaything of science.

Self-Reliant Democracy and/or Wise Leadership?

Standing in the way of the creation of such truly human societies, Mr. Herbert says, are not only our bad habits of thinking in terms of the past, but also our tendency to delegate decisions to experts who persuade us that they know how to solve our problems. This trend is evidenced by the spread of "think tanks" staffed by eminent intellectuals, throughout the country. Well, what of the decision to follow the wise? The fear of hierarchy and of all "authority" so commonly expressed in these days is quite natural for observers who see how badly people are deceived by their leaders, and in the Kali Yuga, Plato's rule that democracy is best for a population that is lacking in wise leaders seems a good one. Yet in contrast with this idea we have the historically accurate picture of how desirable innovation and social and moral progress actually takes place, in the passage from H. T. Buckle quoted by Madame Blavatsky on page 298 of the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine*. By Karmic provision great thinkers arise who sound keynotes of change, and then, after the passage of years, through gradual influence and the filtering of ideas to the masses of people, the truths so introduced become widely known and "*even the dullest intellect wonders* how they could ever have been denied." There is a parallel to what Buckle describes in Thomas Kuhn's examination (in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*) of the process of great changes in scientific thinking.

Other Factors

Yet there is also the consideration of the law of cycles and its effect on all such processes. The further incarnation of Manas brings increasing individual responsibility, as Mr. Judge points out in his editorial concluding the first volume of the *Path*, so that a deep, intuitive perception may be behind the growing distrust of any sort of authority, however simplified or politicalized this feeling may be in its popular currency. Again, and finally, there is the general rule described by H.P.B. in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 326):

> The evolution of the GOD-IDEA proceeds apace with man's own intellectual evolution. So true it is that the noblest ideal to which the religious Spirit of one age can soar, will appear but a gross caricature to the philosophic mind in a succeeding epoch! The philosophers themselves had to be *initiated into perceptive mysteries*, before they could grasp the correct idea of the ancients in relation to this most metaphysical subject. Otherwise—outside such initiation—for every thinker there will be a "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther," mapped out by his intellectual capacity, as clearly and as unmistakeably as there is for the progress of any nation or race in its cycle by the law of Karma.

"Demoralizing Systems"

Studies at the UCLA Graduate School of Management indicate that improving the organization and surroundings of work places is insufficient to overcome the dissatisfaction of employees and to achieve good production levels. (*UCLA Monthly*, November, 1973.) According to Louis E. Davis, the fault lies in the "demoralizing, archaic systems around which most work is organized," and which prevent the natural adjustments and improvement of human relationships from taking place. Dr. Davis finds it significant that both factory workers and white-collar workers are dissatisfied for the same reasons. The *Monthly* reports further:

> In both instances, the technology of machines has been imposed upon people without much thought to the human needs within a social system. Little wonder that the computerized hordes of workers in high-rise factories grow restive under the demands of a machine-dictated technology.
>
> The technologists who design today's computer-oriented systems, says Dr. Davis, almost invariably begin with a set of concepts about organizations, people and machines which are the same as those used to fashion factory systems in the early

1800's. "These are not evil people; they have a set of concepts 100 years old, and which may have been useful in their time."

In the last few decades, the "industrial model" (assembly lines, fractionated tasks, closely-supervised and controlled work) has been applied in all kinds of workplaces, from office buildings to universities. This "industrial model" along with the introduction of the computer has brought about a decline in the quality of working life for white collar and service industry workers alike.

. . . And Production, Too!

Many companies, aware of the decline in morale, organize employee bowling teams or similar activities to promote a group "spirit." But inquiry into the relationship of their employees as *human beings* to the work they do is carefully avoided. "What," Dr. Davis asks, "do you do when there is no way to touch the assembly line?" Most managers still regard the technical requirements of work as of primary importance, with social structure subordinate to them, but Dr. Davis and his colleagues have accumulated evidence showing that work environments satisfying to human needs lead to much higher productivity.

But what constitutes a truly "satisfying" environment? Dr. Davis' research suggests that the answer will go beyond any attempt to accommodate human desires or fears to a "system."

The *Monthly* says:

There must be a reasonable amount of autonomy; given the autonomous choice to define their own particular tasks, a group of workers will be more productive than when closely supervised. Tasks should also be varied; often this is accomplished by rotating work functions. There must be an opportunity to learn, to grow and to develop. There must be an end to coercive tactics on the part of managers.

Louis Davis finds that the most important conclusion in his research has been that productivity and worker satisfaction are not opposites. Given the right organization and job structure, the two factors (though on different scales) increase together.

"What we are finding is that in offices and factories where new forms of organization are being experimented with, people are expressing very deep satisfactions. They are developing deeper relationships with their work situation, as they develop themselves. Objectively, the work is being done as well if not better than before."

Dehumanizing Giantism

The recognition of the need for autonomy and participation by the worker in decisions that give his work an acceptable purpose might eventually lead to much-needed critical examination of the ways in which people earn their living. E. F. Schumacher, a British economist and Gandhian, points out that one of the most destructive aspects of modern economies is the tendency toward larger and larger organization. In an address to business in Switzerland in 1972, he said:

> The implications of a technology moving ever more rapidly in the direction of giantism, complexity, and violence are becoming so clear that no great gifts of prophecy are needed to understand where they are taking us. In human terms, giantism leads to frustration all around; it entails a degree of specialization that destroys work satisfaction and produces fragmentary men, too specialized to be wise. In social terms . . . it means exclusion: an ever increasing proportion of mankind finds itself excluded from the productive process, except in the role of technological gap-fillers, whether on the factory floor or in some vast, "open style" office.

How Men Become "Machines"

The imperatives of mass production do a kind of violence to the nature of human beings, as Dr. Schumacher showed in another lecture, given at Plater College, Oxford:

> Efforts to improve the work situation never can lead very far as long as the nature of the work itself is mindless and stupefying. All too often, the workers resist them because the only thing that makes their work tolerable at all is that it allows them to become machines themselves. They get habituated by way of self-defence and in an effort of self-preservation. . . .
>
> With regard to humanizing the work process itself, the immobilism of present-day society is well-nigh total. As I said before, the kind and quality of work to be done is implicitly taken as given; somebody has to do it whether we like it or not. The time has come to question this implicit assumption and to attack this immobilism. Mindless work is as intolerable in a society that wishes to be sane and civilized as filthy air or stinking water, nay, it is even more intolerable.

If the primary assumption is that production requirements should determine the relationships of the workers, then the interests of mass production cannot help but operate against the

"human element." For then, as Dr. Schumacher says (in his new book, *Small Is Beautiful*), it is only reasonable to produce this or that part of a watch or carburetor in some foreign country where labor costs are cheapest. This makes the role of the poor nothing but "gap-fillers for the rich." At this level, neither creativity nor independence is possible.

When Growth Is Pathological

Speaking of the effect of the greatly increased mobility of the population which inevitably accompanies industrialization, Schumacher says:

> It makes people *footloose*. Millions of people start moving about, deserting the rural areas and the smaller towns to follow the city lights, to go to the big city, causing a pathological growth. . . . While people, with an easy-going kind of logic, believe that fast transport and communications open up a new dimension of freedom (which they do in some rather trivial respects), they overlook the fact that these achievements also tend to destroy freedom, by making everything extremely vulnerable and extremely insecure, unless—please note—unless conscious policies are developed and conscious action is taken, to mitigate the destructive effects of these technological developments. . . .
>
> A large country, I am quite certain, can survive the age of footlooseness only if it achieves a highly articulated *internal* structure. . . . So, when everybody and everything becomes footloose, the *idea of structure* becomes a really central idea, to which all our powers of thought and imagination must be applied.

The author also suggests that development of reliable "internal structure" might compensate for the old external stabilities that die out when the young leave the rural communities and move in large numbers to industrial centers to find jobs. But again, this internal structure, to be vital, would have to develop from relationships on a "human scale," that is, economic organisms that are small enough in size to be genuinely responsive to the human beings involved. This implies the replication of at least some of the conditions naturally present in rural life.

Children's Poetry

Leo Tolstoy claimed that much of what is accepted as art is only counterfeit because it generates in its audience lesser feelings

than those which originally inspired the artist. In his opinion, great talent recreates fundamental human experience, moving the minds and hearts of men everywhere by a sense of universal solidarity, no matter what their background or station in life. A teacher in one of New York City's elementary schools, Kenneth Koch, has used this principle to make fine poetry available to the understanding of children, and to inspire them to do original writing of their own. (*New York Review of Books*, Sept. 20, 1973.) He describes how this program originated:

> I had discovered that my students were capable of enjoying and also learning from good poetry while I was teaching them writing. In one sixth-grade class I had suggested to the students a poem on the difference between the way they seemed to be to others and the way they really felt deep inside themselves. Before they wrote, I read aloud three short poems by D. H. Lawrence to them on secrecy and silence—"Trees in the Garden," "Nothing to Save," and "The White Horse." They liked the last one so much they asked me to read it three times:
>
> The youth walks up to the white
> horse, to put its halter on
> and the horse looks at him in
> silence.
> They are so silent they are in
> another world.

The Child's World

> The Lawrence poems seemed to help the whole class take the subject of their poems seriously, and one girl, Amy Levy, wrote a beautiful and original poem which owed a lot to the specific influence of "The White Horse." She took from Lawrence the conception of another world coexistent with this one, which one can enter by means of secrecy and silence, and used it to write about her distance from her parents and the beauty and mystery of her own imaginings—
>
> We go to the beach
> I look at the sea
> My mother thinks I stare
> My father thinks I want to go in
> the water.
> But I have my own little world . . .

Poetry Needn't Be "Sweet"

Mr. Koch believes that good poetry often fails to elicit a favor-

able response from children because teachers usually choose something they think can be totally understood by children. This, he says, is unnecessary. Another reason is that a " 'childlikeness' of theme and treatment" is given preference, which "condescends to their feelings and to their intelligence." He continues:

> One aspect of "childlikeness" which is particularly likely to work against children's loving poetry and taking it seriously is a cloyingly sweet and trouble-free view of life. Even Blake's "The Lamb," alone or in context with other sweet poems, could be taken that way. Constant sweetness is probably the main thing that makes boys, by the time they are in fifth or sixth grade, dislike poetry as something sissified and silly.
>
> I ended up teaching, in the first series of lessons, three twentieth-century poets who wrote in English and one who wrote in Spanish; two poets whom I suppose could be called Romantic—Blake and Whitman—one English, one American; two seventeenth-century poets; and Shakespeare. There was nothing of a survey about what I did. My point was to introduce my students to a variety of poetic experiences. Other teachers will doubtless want to try other poems.

Lifted Above Themselves

An important function of great literature is to arouse awareness of man's inward potentialities, often hiding undiscovered behind the mundane personality. To afford children the opportunity to discover the imaginative riches in great poets, and also in themselves, is an obligation of the teacher. Mr. Koch tells how he worked:

> Of course, I didn't give quizzes or tests of any kind on poetry. A few bad marks would have made poetry, for most of my students, an enemy. But though few had the critical skill to say much about the poems we read, they all could experience them. For the space of reading the Blake poems and writing Blake-like poems of their own, the children were confronting tigers; they were talking to nature; they were lifted out of their ordinary selves by the magic of what they were saying; the fresh power of their feelings and perceptions was, for a moment, a real power in the world.

Nature Needs Help

In an article on "Humanizing the Earth" in *Science* for Feb. 23, 1973, René J. Dubos proposes that man contributes something unique to the ecology of the earth, going beyond what nature alone

can accomplish. He says that, although more knowledge and respect for natural laws would obviously avert disasters brought on by human interference, the truly beneficent influence of human effort is not to be realized simply by greater conformity to nature's methods. Left undisturbed, the best that nature can do is to establish a self-perpetuating equilibrium in which all wastes are recycled, thus assuring the maintenance of the ecosystem. But this does not always lead to an ideal condition, or even the most efficient use of available energy:

> When applied to such equilibrated systems, the phrase "Nature knows best" is justified, but is in fact little more than a tautology. As used in this phrase, the word *nature* simply denotes a state of affairs spontaneously brought about by evolutionary adaptation resulting from feedbacks which generate a coherent system. There are no problems in undisturbed nature; there are only solutions, precisely because the equilibrium state is an adaptive state. But in a given area, there is usually more than one possible equilibrium state, and there is no evidence that the *natural* solution is necessarily the best or the most interesting solution. In fact, it is likely, as I shall illustrate later, that the symbiotic interplay between man and nature can generate ecosystems more diversified and more interesting than those occurring in the state of wilderness.

Man's Contributions

Dr. Dubos notes a number of instances, such as the behavior of the lemmings, in which nature tends to repeat established patterns even when they are no longer advantageous for survival. "Nature," he says, "does not know how to deal with situations that have no precedents in the evolutionary past."

A way in which man may improve the earth is by living on it and adapting it to his own style of living:

> Until man intervened, much of the earth was covered with forests and marshes. There was grandeur in this seemingly endless green mantle, but it was a monotonous grandeur chiefly derived from immensity and uniformity. The primeval forest almost concealed the underlying diversity of the earth. This diversity was revealed by man in the process of producing food and creating his civilizations.

The Tranquil Landscape

On the other hand, land that is itself unremarkable for variety, such as Dubos' native region, Ile de France, has acquired a beauty

celebrated in literature and art by reason of the charm imparted to its hills by the houses and hedges of its rural scenes. He continues:

> It is true that many ancient civilizations have ruined their environment and that a similar process is going on now in certain highly industrialized areas, but this is not inevitable. Intensive agriculture has been practiced for a thousand years in certain lands without decreasing their fertility or ruining their scenery. Man can create artificial environments from the wilderness and manage them in such a manner that they long remain ecologically stable, economically profitable, esthetically rewarding, and suited to his physical and mental health. The immense duration of certain man-made landscapes contributes a peculiar sense of tranquility to many parts of the Old World; it inspires confidence that mankind can act as steward for the sake of the future.

Misuse of Energy

Further:

> In every part of the world, the interplay between man and nature has commonly taken the form of a true symbiosis, namely, a biological relationship which alters somewhat the two components of the symbiotic system in a way that is beneficial to both. Such transformations, achieved through symbiosis, account in large for the immense diversity of places on earth and for the fitness between man and environment so commonly observed in areas that have been settled and have remained stable for long periods of time.

Whether nature is improved or laid waste by man's occupancy depends upon whether the organic patterns are transformed or simply used up. The amount of energy expended is crucial, and modern technology is, on close examination, often grossly inefficient compared to more primitive methods:

> Paradoxical as this may sound, there are many situations in which the modern farmer spends more industrial calories than the food calories he recovers in the form of food. His caloric expenditure consists chiefly of gasoline for powering his equipment and of electricity for producing chemical fertilizers and pesticides—let alone the caloric input required to irrigate the land and to manufacture tractors, trucks, and the multifarious kinds of machines used in modern farming.

Man's Resonances with Nature

In the periodic longings of people for a more intimate relation-

ship with the earth, Dr. Dubos recognizes a feeling of cosmic unity without which man's life is flawed and partial. He comments:

> After having been for so long frightened by the primeval forest, he has come to realize that its eerie light evokes in him a mood of wonder that cannot be experienced in an orchard or a garden. Likewise, he recognizes in the vastness of the ocean and in the endless ebb and flow of its waves a mystic quality not found in humanized environments. His response to the thunderous silence of deep canyons, the solitude of high mountains, the luminosity of the deserts is the expression of an aspect of his fundamental being that is still in resonance with cosmic events.
>
> Humanizing the earth thus implies much more than transforming the wilderness into agricultural lands, pleasure grounds, and healthy areas suitable for the growth of civilization. It also means preserving the kinds of wilderness where man can experience mysteries transcending his daily life, and also recapture direct awareness of the cosmic forces from which he emerged. It is obvious, however, that man spends his daily life not in the wilderness but in a man-made nature.

The philosophical implication of these observations suggests the Theosophical tenet that man, representing self-conscious mind on earth, is indeed crucial to the evolution of nature. The possessor of creative powers, he is both capable of and responsible for the refinement of all natural forms into more elevated expressions of life.